A

Lenten Paternoster

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A Lenten Paternoster.

PATER NOSTER are the two first words in Latin, meaning "Our Father." In this, as with other prayers, it is the custom of the Catholic Church to indicate certain prayers by the first word or two, and this custom is preserved in the English Book of Common Prayer by the Latin headings to the translations of the Canticles and Psalms.

Sometimes this prayer is referred to as the "Our Father," but it is more usually termed "The Lord's Prayer," as being given to us by the Lord's own lips when he was teaching His disciples on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, a spot still marked by the Church of the Paternoster.

The Lord's Prayer is a concise form of praying for everybody and everything; it is all-embracing, a Divine compendium of Prayer.

Christ gave no command that His precise words should be used; but He said "After this manner pray ye"; although another transalation is—"thus pray ye"; while the Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Luke record it in different words. Thus the Lord's Prayer is a model, an outline, a guide, as to how we should pray.

It is quite simple and devoid of theology, a homely prayer founded on the Fatherhood of God, and not beyond the understanding of any one of us. St. Cyprian said "there is no prayer more spiritual or true than the Lord's Prayer," and that "when we speak to the Father in the Son's words, we shall be more easily heard."

Our Lord did not in this teach us to pray 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord," as the Sacrifice was not yet consummated on the Cross ; but after the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain the way to the Father's presence was opened through Christ.

As related to us by St. Luke, the Lord's Prayer ends with—"Deliver us from Evil" ; but in St. Matthew we have the Doxology, the Lord's ascription of praise and the acknowledgment of the Father's almighty power ; and so has the Church regulated her Liturgy to include the two forms, one with and one without the Doxology.

The family ideal is the first impression in the opening words of the Pater Noster, and this should be more deeply realised than it is if God, our Father, is to be duly honoured. It also sets the Divine example to human life. A family on earth is, or should be, a reflexion of the Divinity. A ather directs his household, he supplies the wants of his children, and if they are disobedient they court, and deserve, punishment ; but too often they close their eyes to the fact that they have themselves to blame, and rebel against their father. This fatherly oversight, and care, and love, should be received in every phase of life, and we would then better realise our duty towards our Heavenly Father.

The prayer given to us by our Saviour cannot too often be repeated if it be done thoughtfully. It occurs in all the liturgical services, it should be repeated in all private devotions ; the Apostolic Constitutions ordered that it be said by all

Christians three times a day. At the same time there is a danger that the repetitions may become vain. It is an individual responsibility that prayer to the Eternal Father be not thoughtlessly uttered, and the full value of each petition be lost.

That the mind should fully grasp the depth and meaning of each petition and ascription, a week's meditation on each sentence of the Lord's Prayer will be a helpful spiritual exercise, especially during Lent, which season includes that time just before the Passion when our Lord instructed us thus to pray, and the final Doxology of praise and glory will enhance the Alleluias of Easter Day, the shouts of "Praise the Lord" for the conquest of death by God the Son, who taught us how to pray to PATER NOSTER.

Ash Wednesday.

"Our Father which art in Heaven."

Wednesday—O Father in Heaven, Thou art Almighty, all-powerful; nothing is beyond Thee. In our helplessness we, Thy children, pray to Thee. Too often we rely on our own strength, and we fall; keep us from pride; may we always turn to Thee for strength to combat the wiles of the devil. Bring us, we beseech Thee, through our difficulties, from which we see no way out.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—O Divine Wisdom, Eternal Father, who from Thy throne in Heaven seest all things. Thou seest our wrongdoing; we pray Thee guide us aright. Thou seest our foolishness; guide us with Thy wisdom. Give us wisdom, we pray, in dealing with nations and with people, in our work and in our homes, and grant that we may do all things to Thy honour and glory.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—Father of Wrath, we pray Thee turn Thine anger from us; bring us, Thy children, in contrition to Thee; pardon our sins; forgive us our neglect of Thee; forgive us our wrong thoughts, our angry words, our sinful deeds. O stay the evil consequences of our sins, that they be not harmful to others; and give us patience to bear the punishment we incur, through Jesus, Thy Son.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—O Father of Love, in faith and confidence we, Thy children, come to Thee that in Thy great love Thou wilt have mercy on us, forgive and help us. May we, for love of Thee, love all men, and assist in knitting together Thy children on earth, of all Britain, of all nations, in the bond of Thy family. And when Thou callest us, may we say, in the sacred words of Thy beloved Son—" Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

First week in Lent.

"Hallowed be Thy Name."

Sunday—Thou, Eternal Father, art holy, Grant that we may always bear this in mind, in the home, in the field, in the office, and in the workshops and prick our conscience that we may never think nor speak of Thee lightly or thoughtlessly. Help us to render to Thee true and laudable worship, which will be accepted by Thee through the sacrifice of Thy Son, Jesus.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—Thy Name, O Father, is holy. We pray Thee that we may never utter it but with reverence, that we may never take it in vain, in swearing, or in ribaldry. Grant that, if by the law of the land we have to take an oath in Thy name, it may be done in the full knowledge of its serious truth.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Thy Word, O Father, is holy We pray that we may more diligently study the Bible in the full belief that it is Thy Word, and by it be guided to true reverence to Thee. Give us faith in Thy Word, and let us not criticise it, only accepting some portions and discarding that which we do not understand. Give us wisdom to accept it with faith, and protect us from all heresy.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—Everything appertaining to Thee, O Heavenly Father, is holy. Grant that all our deeds may be done in Thy Name; that our work may be consecrated to Thee, that our acts to all men may be done in Thy Name, even in the giving of a cup of cold water to one needing it. Put it into our hearts to help in spreading a reverence for Thy Name, and in making it known to those who have heard it not.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—We pray Thee, O Father, that we may ever be guarded from blaspheming Thy holy Name. Whatever may be our trials, give us the power to cling to Thee, and have faith that Thou wilt deliver us.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—In Thy Name, O Heavenly Father, are devils cast out; in Thy Name all evil can be overcome. Grant that we may always revere Thy Name, and in Its power be preserved from all temptations.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, we praise Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.

O holy God,

O holy Strong One,

O holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

Second week in Lent.

"Thy Kingdom come."

Sunday—Thy Kingdom come. May Thy Kingdom of Heaven, O Father, eternal King, be quickly spread over the whole earth. Thy Kingdom of peace, obedience, love, order and loyalty. We pray that each one of us, by loyalty to Thee, by following Thy commands, may be of Thy Kingdom, and, by the guidance of Thy Holy Spirit we may influence others to become Thy subjects.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—We pray Thee, O Heavenly King, that we may do Thy will. We are ever prone to follow our own wills instead of submitting to Thine. Reign, we beseech Thee, in our hearts, that we may be subject to Thee in every act of our daily lives. May we be active in Thy cause, and, by example, win others to Thee.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Thy Kingdom, O Father, is of Love. We pray that Thy Love may rule our hearts; that by love of others they may be excited to love Thee. Grant that our love of power and of sinful pleasures may be extinguished, and that Thy Love alone may reign in us.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—There is Peace in Thy Kingdom, O Father. We pray that our hearts may be so

drawn to Thee that we may receive that peace which passeth all man's understanding. Grant that sin and strife may be conquered by Thy love, and that peace may reign in our homes, in our country, and among all nations.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—In Thy Kingdom, O God, order reigneth. We pray Thee that our hearts may be so ordered that we may receive Thee as King, that we may do Thy will, hold Thy faith, believe Thy word, and do Thy work.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—From Thy Kingdom, O Heavenly Father, the angels go forth at Thy command. May we, also, be the messengers of Thy Kingdom, carrying Thy Gospel to those who have not heard it; and may Thy angels attend us to guide our feet lest they stumble against the stones of iniquity.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—May Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, in which all strife and sin find no place. "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (*Acts* 14, 22), support us, we pray Thee, through all the trials and temptations of this world that we may attain Thy heavenly Kingdom.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Third week in Lent.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."

Sunday—In heaven, O Father, Thy Will is done without question. Angels and saints fulfil Thy wishes. We pray for that complete faith in Thee; strengthen us to crush our wills to Thine, that we may do Thy will on earth like as it is in Thy heavenly Kingdom.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—Give us, we pray Thee, O Father, that perfect humility which will do Thy Will without asking for reasons beyond that it is Thy desire. Purge from us the sin of pride, which is wholly opposed to Thy Will, and to the life of Jesus when on earth.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Give us strength, O Father, to do Thy Will under whatever trial and tribulation to which we may be subjected; that pain may not turn us from Thee, but, borne in Thy strength may our souls be purified and made fit for Thy eternal Presence.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—Give us joy, O Father, in doing Thy Will. In doing that which gives pleasure to one we love we are joyful. We pray that our love for Thee may be so great, that whatever we sacrifice on earth, for Thee, may give us heavenly joy.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—Give us guidance, O Father, to do Thy Will. We pray Thee give us Thy Holy Spirit to guide us in all our doings. Assist us to surrender ourselves and our wills to be guided in a pure path amid all the evils which beset us, that we may do Thy Will whilst still on this earthly pilgrimage.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—Give us perseverance, O Father, we pray Thee, in doing Thy Will. The tempter is ever zealous to turn us from doing right. When we grow slack, we pray Thee, renew in us that perseverance with which alone we can accomplish Thy Will.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—Inspire us with love to do Thy Will, O Heavenly Father. A love for Thee which will lead us to conquer all thoughts, words, or deeds which are not in accord with Thy Will. Give us a love which will lead us to sacrifice all selfishness to Thy honour and glory.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Fourth week in Lent.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Sunday—We pray Thee, our Heavenly Father, that we may receive our spiritual food, the Body and Blood of Jesus, which He gave for us, and by It grant that our souls may

rise to Thee. That refreshed and emboldened by the Bread of Heaven we may overcome all temptations.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—Prosper, we beseech Thee, our handiwork. Grant that we pursue our daily work to Thy honour and glory; and, by Thy guidance, we may gain our daily bread.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Look, O Father, upon all those who are in want, and supply them with food, even as Thou fed Elijah by means of ravens. Strengthen our faith in Thy promise that Thou wilt provide us with food.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—O God, Thou who saidst that a sparrow falls not to the ground without Thy knowledge, we beseech Thee to give food to the hungry and clothes to the naked. And although we may not see how food is to be obtained, give us faith in Thy word, which cannot fail.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—O Heavenly Father, whose Son instituted the most Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood to preserve us from idolatry, and to provide us with a heavenly manna wherewith we might be strengthened to resist evil and to be admitted to Divine communion. We thank Thee, and praise Thee for Thy great gifts.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—Forgive, we beseech Thee, O Father, all those who are wasteful, guide them to a better appreciation of Thy gifts, that they may see the sin of wastefulness, and amend the same. Give us all a sense of Thy bounty, and instil in us thankful hearts.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—O Father, at the end of our week of work put into us thankful hearts for Thy provision. Grant that out of our abundance we may, in Thy name, give to those in want; and prepare us to receive the Bread of Life.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Passion Week.

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Sunday—Thou, O Christ, who in Thy Passion, when hanging on the Cross, dying by the hands of those whom Thou came to redeem, asked for their forgiveness of the Eternal Father, endue us, we pray Thee, with Thy spirit, that we may forgive all who have wronged us.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—O God, we beseech Thee, forgive us all our sins, even as Thou forgave the penitent thief. Forgive us our neglect of Thee, the Giver of all our benefits. Forgive, O Father,

the sins of Thy children. Give us the grace of Thy Holy Spirit that we may be truly penitent and deserving of Thy mercy.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Forgive, O Father, all our sins of thought. Forgive any thoughts of heresy we may have entertained; any grumbling at our pains, disappointments, or circumstances. Instil in us a spirit of contentment and patience, and let us not think evil of others. In Thy mercy forgive us.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—Forgive, O Father, all our sins of words. Often have we spoken hastily. Forgive us, we pray Thee, all lies, deceptions. scandals, or other things of which our minds and our mouths have been guilty. Strengthen us and purify our utterances, that we offend Thee no more.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Thursday—Forgive, O Father, all our sinful deeds. Subdue our anger and give us charity. Awake us from sloth and make us active in good works. Lead us from neglect to diligence in Thy cause. Forgive, we beseech Thee, for we have grievously sinned.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Friday—Guide us, O Father, to a realisation of the complete forgiveness we must give if we

are to obtain Thy pardon. Help us, we beseech Thee, in the power of Thy love to freely forgive those who have injured us, and have mercy on us.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Saturday—We beseech Thee, O God, to pardon all our sins before we die, and grant that we may enjoy peace and refreshment with other souls until Thou takest us to the joys of Thy presence in Heaven.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Holy Week.

"Lead us not into temptation."

Sunday—O God, in pity look upon our weakness, we beseech Thee, and guard us from the constant assaults of the Devil. It is only in Thy strength we can resist the temptations which come to us; prevent us, we pray, from seeking temptations. Open our eyes to sympathy and all virtues; but close them to evil things.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Monday—Keep us we pray, O Father, from listening to evil and scandalous talk; but open our ears to Thy word, to the cry of the suffering, to the appeal of the hungry, and in Thy Name guide us to help the helpless, and thus raise a shield against temptation.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Tuesday—Turn us, O Father, from all temptations to neglect Thy worship. Increase our longing for the odour of incense, which is as the prayers of Thy saints. Inspire us to greater zeal in praising Thee, and in this will be a defence against temptation.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Wednesday—Guide us we pray Thee, O Father, from going in the paths of temptations; support us in Thy works. Even as Thou, by Thy touch healed the maimed, so consecrate our sense of feeling to the delicate help of the sick, and our hands to the ministrations of the infirm.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Maunday Thursday—Keep us we, beseech Thee, O Father, from the temptations of drink and gluttony. Help us to restrain our appetites for earthly foods; but make us hunger for the spiritual food of the Body and Blood of Thy blessed Son, Jesus, who, this day, gave us this heavenly sustenance wherewith we may be strengthened to resist temptations.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Good Friday.

"Deliver us from Evil."

Almighty God, Eternal Father, Thy promises to protect us from evil are manifold; from Thy

holy Word we know "The Lord will deliver *us* in the day of evil," that "The Lord shall preserve *us* from all evil," and that He "shall establish *us* and keep us from evil." Now we are freed from the power of the Evil One by the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. We pray Thee that we neglect not Thy goodness, but in Thy strength and by the Sacrifice of the Cross, we may be delivered from all Evil.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Easter Eve.

"Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory for ever and ever."

We praise Thee, O Father, Eternal King, that Thine is the Kingdom, the Kingdom of Love and Purity, Glory and Life; we pray Thee prepare us for Thy Presence, for Thou art All Powerful, and can raise us from the grave, to dwell with Thee in the Courts of Heaven.

Our Father. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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